

REMARKS

Claims 1-12, 14, and 16-20 are pending, including independent claims 1, 2, 5, 14, and 17-19. Claims 2-4 are allowed as before. Claim 6 is objected to as duplicative, and has been cancelled. The remaining claims are again rejected on the basis of prior art, although the Examiner has cited additional references in view of Applicant's previous response.

Initially, Applicant thanks Examiners Ng and Smits for discussing the Office Action with Applicant's undersigned attorney on March 15, 2007. Applicant's undersigned attorney requested the telephone conference to discuss the current rejections of certain independent claims. Agreement was reached as to claim 14, and Examiner Ng agreed to withdraw the finality of the present Office Action and consider Applicant's present response to the Office Action. The arguments presented by Applicant's attorney in the conference are set forth below and expanded upon. Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's Interview Summary mailed on March 18, 2007. However, Applicant disagrees with some aspects of the summary, as explained in the remarks below.

One feature in independent claims 1 and 5 is that speech guidance is stopped if it would interfere with an audio or image output of an operated device. In the present Office Action, the Examiner cites USP 5,890,122 ("DeLine") for this feature.

DeLine describes a rearview mirror sound processing system including a microphone that enhances the vocal to non-vocal noise ratio (e.g., Abstract; col. 1, lines 21-28; col. 3, lines 13-27). An information display may be provided with the mirror assembly, e.g., to display a video or the status of vehicle functions (e.g., col. 27, lines 21-35). The passage cited by the Examiner (col. 28, lines 21-28) describes a feature to warn of an approaching train. Although this warning system may include a display that may override any existing displays, DeLine has nothing to do with a speech input guidance method or device, does not search for a speech input executing command corresponding to a detected device operation, does not provide a user with speech input guidance, and does not stop the speech input guidance if it would interfere with a detected audio or image output of an operated device. Applicant submits that there is no suggestion, motivation, or teaching to combine DeLine

with Van Kleeck in any rational way to result in the claimed invention. Also, Applicant's attorney did not agree in the telephone conference that "DeLine reads on claims 1 and 5 as they currently stand," as stated in the Examiner's interview summary.

In the March 15, 2007 conference, the Examiner further explained the rejection. The Examiner stated that claims 1 and 5 as they are currently written arguably encompass a situation where speech input guidance is provided to the user, then the system detects the occurrence of an audio or image output of an operated device, and then the speech input guidance is terminated. In the Examiner's rejection, Van Kleeck is used to show a system that provides speech input guidance, and DeLine is used to suggest that speech input guidance that has already begun can be stopped or overridden by more important information. To clarify distinctions over the cited art, claims 1 and 5 have been amended to recite that speech input guidance is not provided if an audio or image output of an operated device is already occurring. This feature is supported in the application, e.g., at p. 25, line 26 – p. 26, line 17 and Fig. 10. With this clarifying amendment, it is seen that DeLine is contrary to claims 1 and 5, because DeLine describes overriding a previous display whereas Applicant's claims describe that a previous output is not overridden. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 1 and 5 has been overcome. Dependent claims 7-12 are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claim 14 recites, inter alia, that when a user enters only one of an operation object and the content of an operation, the device provides a speech input executing command corresponding to the other. Thus, the claimed subject matter operates for both possibilities (when only an operation object is specified and when only the content of an operation is specified). If a user voices only an operation object, such as "mail" for email, the system can display the speech operations available for this operation object. Conversely, if the user voices only an operation, such as "up", that is applicable to multiple operation objects (e.g., the volume on an audio device, or the temperature), the system can display the operation objects available for this operation. In the Office Action, the Examiner cited U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0052030 ("Shiraishi") as teaching this feature. Applicant disagrees.

Shiraishi describes a command processing apparatus that can display help information corresponding to a command that is entered, or can display commands matching a character

string that is entered (e.g., Abstract; ¶¶ 2, 10, 16, 58, 59). The passage cited by the Examiner (¶ 77) merely describes that, in response to a help request by the user, the system can display a plurality of candidate commands corresponding to a character string entered by the user. Thus, Shiraishi does not teach providing a speech input executing command indicating a corresponding operation object when only an operation content is entered by the user, nor providing a speech input executing command indicating a corresponding operation content when only an operation object is entered by the user.

Applicant's attorney presented this explanation at the March 15, 2007 conference, and the Examiner agreed and will withdraw the rejection of claim 14. The rejection of dependent claims 16 and 20 should be withdrawn for at least the same reasons.

Independent claims 17 and 19 are cancelled so that the rejections of those claims are moot.

Regarding claim 18, Applicant's attorney did not agree at the March 15, 2007 conference "that Lennig et al. teaches the limitations of claim 18," as stated in the Examiner's interview summary. To the contrary, Applicant continues to believe that the cited art is not applicable.

One feature in claim 18 is that the form of the guidance output of a command is different from that of other commands, if the count for the command exceeds a predetermined number. The Examiner asserts that USP 5,479,488 ("Lennig") makes this feature obvious. Applicant disagrees. Lennig is unrelated to the claimed subject matter. Lennig is directed to automatic directory assistance for a telecommunications system (e.g., Abstract). The passage cited by the Examiner (col. 7, lines 6-11) merely describes that after a predetermined number of failed attempts to recognize the user's voice response, the automated system can hand the call off to a human operator.

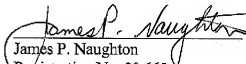
In the March 15, 2007 conference, the Examiner further explained her position that in Lennig, the voice of a human operator is a "different form" than the automated directory assistance. Applicant submits that this argument is insufficient. Claim 18 recites a speech input guidance device that includes components for searching for relevant speech input executing commands, providing search results to a user by a display screen or by speech, counting the outputs of individual speech input executing commands, and changing the form

of output of a command if the count for that command exceeds a predetermined number. In the Examiner's application of Lennig, the voice of the human operator is not a different form of output by the automated directory assistance system, but rather is outside of the system entirely. Moreover, the automated portion of Lennig does not search for and provide speech input executing commands, but rather asks the user for inputs. Further, the counting done in Lennig is of failed attempts to recognize a user's input and has nothing to do with counting outputs of individual speech input executing commands as recited in claim 18.

The Examiner's rejection of claim 18 relies on a combination of four references -- Van Kleeck, DeLine, Cohen, and Lennig -- and the Examiner concedes that the first three references do not disclose this feature of claim 18. Applicant submits that Lennig also does not disclose this feature, and there is no suggestion, motivation or teaching to combine the four references in any rational way to result in the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the claims as presently amended are patentable over the cited art. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of this application. If the Examiner believes the application still is not in condition for allowance, she is invited to telephone Applicant's undersigned attorney at 312-321-4723 to discuss any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,


James P. Naughton
Registration No. 30,665
Attorney for Applicant

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610
(312) 321-4200